

Three Count

November 14, 1991

Volume 1, Number 9-10

WWF, Hogan Slammed in Media; Implements Steroid Testing

Facing a devastating bodyslam from the mainstream media, the World Wrestling Federation began its first tests for anabolic steroids last Wednesday at a television taping in New Haven, Conn.

The testing was spurred by the impending telecasts of segments on *Entertainment Tonight* (11/14) and *Inside Edition* (11/15) that portrayed steroid use as a necessity for wrestlers to reach the top of the WWF.

Entertainment Tonight's segment, which was changed from a piece strictly on steroids in wrestling as a whole, focused on the WWF's delay in announcing its steroid testing policy. ET interviewed two WWF preliminary wrestlers -- **Brian Donahue** and **Dusty Wolfe** -- after an introduction explaining the WWF had announced it would test all its wrestlers for steroids and a pre-taped interview with **Hulk Hogan**. Hogan said he had taken medical steroids for an injury a few years ago, which were supplied by **Dr. George Zahorian**, but had not taken them since. Donahue said the wrestlers in the locker room would "love to be tested," while Wolfe said he wasn't tested and he only saw "some of the guys" taking steroid tests. Wolfe's statement was followed by comments from those who do not believe the WWF's steroid testing policy will be legitimate -- **Bruno Sammartino** and I. Sammartino was preceded by footage of Zahorian and an explanation of Zahorian's conviction on eight counts of illegal steroid distribution to professional wrestlers in June. Sammartino, a former

WWF announcer and wrestler through 1988, said the testing was an "elaborate scheme" by WWF owner **Vince McMahon**. Sammartino explained that McMahon could suspend a mid-card wrestler for steroid use, but none of the top stars would probably ever be, because McMahon would be the overseer of the test. ET then aired copies of my column and a brief on-camera segment where I said, "The World Bodybuilding Federation, the WWF's sister company, announced it had tested or steroids three times within the past year. It lied. Why should we believe the WWF now?" They also paraphrased some of my comments where I explained that as long as wrestlers are pushed to the public based on muscularity, the steroid problem will never go away, because no testing is perfect.

The *Inside Edition* piece was even more hard-hitting. Heavily hyped throughout the week (both shows ran segments on wrestling because it was sweeps week), the IE piece portrayed Hogan as a steroid user and buried him in regards to being a role model. There was a brief segment on long-time steroid user "**Superstar**" **Billy Graham**, and also an interview with a former wrestler (whose face was digitized to hide his identity) who said he purchased steroids from Zahorian, steroids were still a major problem in the group and necessary for a promotional push.

The focus of the piece was Zahorian. A segment of his testimony where he said Hogan was a heavy steroid user between 1984-89 was blown up and high-

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lighted. Sammartino ripped Hogan and the WWF, and Graham talked about his medical problems in a segment taped a while ago. There was also a taped interview with Zahorian where he claimed the wrestlers were his "patients." Zahorian also said steroids have never been directly responsible for any deaths (which, I understand, is not true). A Harrisburg doctor described Zahorian as a physician gone bad, and compared his distribution of steroids to wrestlers to a someone dealing cocaine.

My story on the state of Florida's attempt to regulate pro wrestling and institute a steroid test also ran on the front page of *The Miami Herald's* sports page Nov. 5, with a follow-up story the next day. I also did two radio shows (Wade Keller's *Pro Wrestling Torch* on KFAN in Minneapolis and John Arrezi's *Pro Wrestling Spotlight* in New York City) on Nov. 10 talking about the story. Sammartino, Terry Funk and Dave Meltzer of *The Wrestling Observer Newsletter* were on Arrezi's show Sunday. Sammartino had his usual unkind words or the WWF (McMahon in particular), while Funk talked about how the WWF had destroyed wrestling.

Entertainment Tonight has a piece scheduled to air Nov. 18 with interviews with McMahon, Ric Flair, Hogan and a few other "super heroes." I expect this is ET's way of retracting the story over pressure from the WWF. I will have details in the 11/21 issue of *Three Count*. I also expect a story from Phil Mushnick of the *New York Post* within the next week bashing the WWF and inciting the New York media to resume its WWF witch hunt.

World Championship Wrestling remarkably swerved clear of any mention in either televised piece. Originally, ET was going to show footage of Tom "Z-Man" Zenk and mention his September arrest on steroid possession charges, but the WWF's testing announcement forced the segment to be revamped. ET was also prepared to mention WCW's lack of a testing policy.

The WWF's steroid testing policy is finally in place. Since McMahon announced a test was to be instituted in July, the only announcement made is Comprehensive Drug Testing of Los Angeles would be the testing agency. CDT is the agency for the steroid tests of Major League Baseball, National Basketball Association and the U.S. Olympic team. WWF spokesman Steve Planamenta said Aegis Analytical will be the lab in which the tests are analyzed. Aegis, which stemmed from the ground-breaking testing center at Vanderbilt University, also has a good reputation, with the NCAA, NFL and various police departments among its client list. The test overseer is Dr. Anthony Daly of Los Angeles. Daly is the team physician for the U.S. Olympic team, and held the same position for the Los Angeles Clippers. He is also the medical consultant on President George Bush's Council on Physical Fitness.

Planamenta said the drug testing would be ran-

dom, but was uncertain of what the penalties are for those wrestlers who test positive. He did say a suspension and enrollment in a rehabilitation center would be mandatory for first-time offenders, followed by a longer suspension for a second failure and expulsion from the WWF or a third. The tests in New Haven, though, are probably not going to count, because, as Planamenta said, "We need to see if there is a problem." Planamenta also said those wrestlers suspended would not be announced publicly, because the doctors involved in the testing said it was not the proper thing to do. When asked about the timing of the test, Planamenta mentioned that both ET and Inside Edition held their respective pieces until sweeps week.

What happens now? I figure four-to-five weeks of heavy WWF hype and media grandstanding to convince people the WWF's steroid testing is real. And maybe it is. But I have no indication that it is. McMahon is right in arguing that Wolfe wasn't tested because he is a preliminary wrestler (and with drug-tests costing \$200-\$300 each, McMahon shouldn't be faulted for not testing performers who will likely work for three television matches and fade away). Three of the WWF's most recent acquisitions -- Chris Chavis, Del Wilkes (*The Patriot* from the Global Wrestling Federation) and Chris Walker -- receive their push largely because of their rippling physiques. What about Sid Justice? And don't forget, McMahon has dabbled in the pseudo-sport where steroid abuse is most rampant -- body-building -- and hasn't even attempted to clean it up. There are some wrestlers who would take steroids even if they weren't in the business. But there are also wrestlers who are destroying their health through the drug, because they need to maintain a decent size and body weight to maintain their promotional push. If McMahon is serious, the wrestlers will shrink. Meltzer tells me several WWF performers, including Hogan and Flair, looked noticeably smaller last weekend at live shows in California. If the WWF is not serious and size decreases are only temporary until the media disappears, the facade will continue -- and probably succeed for a while. However, the WWF can't hide forever. Within a few years (maybe even a few months), some WWF stars of today are going to be experiencing health problems because of steroid use. Or maybe a wrestler is going to get arrested with the drug. Or a disgruntled wrestler decides to spill his guts and write a book. I understand the WWF was scared Graham would appear on both shows and reveal his knowledge on what steroid abuse occurred in the WWF in the late 1980s. The steroid problem in wrestling is a time bomb waiting to go off, and no one has tried to diffuse it.

Florida

Yes, the wrestling scene in Florida is hopping once again with news from independents to the two major groups. Here's a rundown:

TWF: The big news is Joel Goodhart's announcement of the Tri-States Wrestling Federation's plans to promote 60 shows in Florida (five a month) during 1992. Goodhart, the group's owner, currently promotes wrestling shows in the Northeast, and is strengthened by a wrestling radio show on WIP-AM (The Squared Circle) in Philadelphia to promote cards and events for his fan club (autograph sessions with WCW wrestlers, out-of-state trips to attended WCW pay-per-view shows, etc.). Goodhart's TWF would not have a television network in Florida (just like it doesn't in the Northeast), but would promote shows based on word-of-mouth.

Goodhart said he planned to run monthly shows in certain towns in the state (Naples, Daytona Beach, Pompano Beach are three), and build up crowds by eliminating no-shows and having the shows live up to the TWF's motto -- We wrestle, We brawl, We do it all. Talent would be comprised of the top TWF stars already living in Florida (Buddy Landel, The Black Hearts, Kevin Sullivan), with some Northeast-based wrestlers being flown down periodically. Payoffs to the wrestlers wouldn't be great at first, Goodhart explained, but would increase if the monthly shows prove successful. Goodhart, though, is likely without the services of the Black Hearts, who have split up for personal reasons.

Goodhart also said he plans to promote 186 shows during 1992, which sounds like he's going to be spread awfully thin. The TWF has drawn good gates for some shows in the Northeast, with the fan-base comprised of hard-core wrestling fans who like blood in matches. Whether he can draw that same audience here remains questionable. Expect his first shows in January, with a Buddy Rodgers vs. Landel match in Fort Lauderdale to headline one of his first attempts.

IWF: Eddy Mansfield's International Wrestling Federation continues to putter along, but without its spot on The Sunshine Network. Chris Qualmann, Mansfield's Orlando-based legal counsel, said the IWF was hoping to return to the network on Nov. 30, but Sunshine officials say there are no plans to bring the IWF back. Mansfield signed a 13-week contract with Sunshine in July, and produced some surprisingly good programs during his stint (no matter how bad the announcing was). The network wanted to renew the contract, but Mansfield is reported to be suffering financial difficulties. Should/when he return, Mansfield may be using Dick Slater as his top star.

LMLW: Howard Brody's Ladies Major League Wrestling is still alive and kicking. The Pompano-based

group had its shows taped from March 1990 aired on Sports Channel this month, and will have them aired negotiating with bankers to receive funds to begin regular television tapings again. The show is also airing on 110 stations via Channel America. Brody runs a 900-number (1-900-420-7526) that discusses not only ladies wrestling, but the other promotions as well. Cost is \$2 per minute.

Suncoast: Henry Raines' promotion continues to produce entertaining television shows emanating from Palmetto. Highlights from Raines' 10/26 taping in front of 350 fans at the Manatee County Civic Center:

- **Charlie Fields and The Giant Outlaw** (managed by the colorless Grizzly Bear Ray) won the Suncoast tag-team titles by defeating Vern Henderson and Gator Gillmore. Finish came when Gator had The Outlaw in a sleeper, Ray handed Fields some brass knuckles and, well you know the rest. The funny thing was, though, the front row of fans at the matches left the arena in protest of the finish (one which Suncoast fans aren't used to). One 15-year-old kid was even in tears.

- **Jumbo Baretta** retained his Florida title by pinning The Masked Superstar (Bob Cook) with his feet on the ropes. Earlier in the bout, a Superstar pin was disallowed when he was caught executing the same illegal maneuver.

- **Billy Freedom** -- using wrestling's first hippie gimmick -- defeated "Mr. Everything" Dave Johnson.

- Suncoast's attempts to re-educate fans to wrestling maneuvers continued with Baretta showing Ion Weston proper bridging techniques, including a well-done fisherman suplex.

- **Penelope Paradise** and **A.J. Watson** fought to a double disqualification, setting up a Nov. 21 match in Weston's hometown of Auburndale.

Suncoast returns to the Manatee County Civic Center Nov. 23 with Tommy Rogers facing Pat Tanaka in the main event. Other matches include Dean Malenko vs. The Superstar, Rico Federico-Fire Cat (Brady Boone) vs. Jerry Flynn-Ion Weston and a rematch for the Suncoast tag-team title straps.

ICWA: This is the group humorously referred to as "the old Florida office" -- James Manley's International Championship Wrestling Association. The reason for the undeserving nickname is because the group runs weekly shows from the Sportatorium in Tampa where the old Florida Championship Wrestling group used to. Of course, the matches and angles are nowhere near what used to come from the latter group. Ron Slinker is the booker, and Jim Backlund is his assistant. The group's top stars are Slater and Sullivan, with the top feud being Tanaka vs. Backlund (which should produce fantastic matches. Other wrestlers appearing are Mark Starr, Hurricane Walker, The Master Blasters, The Star

Riders, Tex Salinger and Kenny Kendall.

The ICWA doesn't have a television slot yet, but they did film a 20-minute promo tape a few weeks back. A source close to the group said the Sportatorium looked awful and the lighting of the crowd was equally as bad, but the promo should look OK, because the matches were taped with three different cameras and will be sliced in post-production.

South Florida: Former WWF wrestler Joe Mirto has two wrestling shows for charity upcoming. The first is a benefit on Nov. 29 for The Carver Theater (6969 N.W. 2nd Ave.) in Liberty City, with Sullivan vs. Tyree Pride in the main event. Other matches on the show include Bobby Whales vs. Steve Collins, The Miami Mauler (Mirto) vs. Death Row 3260, Corporal Kirschner vs. Jim Young and Rocco Gibraltar vs. Rotten Ron. Speaking of Sullivan, he will soon be going on a tour of Japan. I'm not sure for what group yet, though. Mirto also has a fundraiser Dec. 15 for Temple Beth Moshe at 2225 NE 121 St. Main event is Mauler vs. Young, with Kirschner vs. The Original Terminator, Collins vs. Gibraltar and Whales vs. Ron as the undercard. Tickets for both shows are \$5. Mirto raised \$12,000 for the Linda Ray Center for abused and abandoned children on 10/19 in Miami. Ricky Santana wrestled Kirschner on the show.

WCW: The Jacksonville Coliseum will be the site of the group's Super Brawl II pay-per-view show on May 17. The Taj Mahal in New Jersey will be the site of Wrestle War '91 in late February. Originally the Miami Beach Convention Center was to be the site of Wrestle War, but a trip by WCW executive vice-president Jim Herd showed the building unsuitable for good television. WCW plans to run seven shows in Jacksonville during 1992. The WWF begins promoting shows in Jacksonville on Jan. 7 at the Coliseum, which is the only major arena in the city (yes, it's hard to believe considering Jacksonville is the second-largest city in the country geographically). The WWF and WCW cannot run shows within three weeks of each other at the Coliseum, so expect the WWF to run a loaded show at the building in late April. Jacksonville is one of WCW's hottest cities not only at the gate, but on pay-per-view. In a chart assembled by legislative analyst Janet Clark, WCW pay-per-view shows had an average buy rate of 3.0 in a universe of 70,949 addressable homes--the highest in the state. Other good markets for WCW included Fort Myers (2.9 of 11,651 homes), Tampa (2.25 on 35,718 homes) and Pensacola (2.2 of 10,187 homes).

WCW's December swing through Florida is surprisingly decent. The 12/2 Sunrise and 12/3 Fort Pierce shows are headlined by Sting vs. Cactus Jack. 12/5 in Melbourne and 12/6 in Perry were originally scheduled as Lex Luger-Mr. Hughes against The Steiner Brothers, but that has since been changed to The Steiners vs. The Enforcers. Luger has a clause in his contract forcing him

to only have to work a certain amount of live shows, and with his current schedule, he could have taken January, February and March off before his contract flipped over. **Big Van Vader vs. Van Hammer** is another match that is scheduled. The Freebirds were originally scheduled to wrestle The Enforcers, but they will be substituted for. I don't have a line-up for 12/7 in Jacksonville yet, but will for next issue. I do know it will be a loaded show, as the Bruise Cruise will be history. Sting is appearing on the boat for the latter half of the cruise; Luger the first.

WCW will no longer run shows from the Knight Center in Miami. A WCW source said the shows were simply not drawing enough money to justify the rent of the building (WCW drew only 781 people with its Bash card in August). Of course, that's not to mention most of the shows have been lousy, without good main events or with any outside advertising. No word on a new building, but expect the Convention Center should WCW venture down to Miami again.

WWF: Almost the entire lineup of the WWF's Nov. 24 show at The Miami Arena has been shuffled. Originally, Sid Justice was to wrestle Jake Roberts and Jim Duggan against The Undertaker. But since Justice is injured (torn biceps) and nobody cares about Duggan-Taker, the new main event vs. Duggan-Mr. Madness (Randy Savage) vs. Taker-Roberts. Also, The Rockers have been split into singles action against The Beverly Brothers, with Sean Michaels against Blake and Marty Jannetty vs. Beau. Jimmy Snuka is replacing Jim Neidhart (who is off the road selling a fake knee injury stemming from Ric Flair's figure-four leg lock) against The Berserker, and former Hollywood resident Chris Chavis replaces the departed Ricky "The Dragon" Steamboat against Skinner (Steve Keirn). Speaking of which, Keirn was in the audience at the ICWA's first taping.

Some WWF buy rates from Clark's report: Coral Springs was the group's strongest city, with a 3.5 percent buy rate for 12,400 homes or five pay-per-view events in 1990. Orlando and Tampa were also good, with average buy rates of 3.3 percent (128,057 homes in Orlando; 15,600 from Paragon Cable in Tampa). WCW buy rates outdrew the WWF in Jacksonville (3.0-1.9) and Fort Myers (2.9-2.7 for 11,651 homes). Clark's survey covered 48 percent of the state. The average buy rate of pay-per-view shows was 3.1 for the WWF and 2.1 for WCW (the latter figure above the national average).

World Wrestling Federation

The major news of a busy week surrounds Ric Flair and his title belt situation. In a front-page news story on Nov. 14, *The Charlotte Observer* reported a U.S. District Judge granted the National Wrestling Alliance a temporary restraining order on any further telecasts of Flair's former NWA belt. The decision forced the WWF to call each of its 300 affiliated stations and ask them to cut any segment featuring the title, including those with Flair in it. "The NWA argues its symbol is being used to benefit the competition," wrote *Observer* writer Joseph Menn. "Six more hours with Flair have been shot to promote a coming pay-per-view match. 'Your honor, we're going to receive a body blow if these are shown,' charged NWA attorney Faison Hicks. 'We'll be the laughing stock of the industry!'" WWF attorney Theodore Dismoor argued, "A lot of wrestlers in this country...have gone around with big, flashy gold belts. A belt's a belt." Both sides agreed to meet again 10/21 to discuss the issue further. None of the stations took the belt off this weekend's telecasts.

However, **Three Count** has learned that Judge Graham Mullen denied the temporary restraining order, but both sides agreed to its content. The NWA filed a lawsuit against the WWF Wednesday for its promotion of Flair and the belt as, "This is the belt worn by the *real* world champion." A source close to the situation said the NWA was suing for use of the title "and any facsimile of the title." That's the key, because the WWF has made a new title belt for Flair that closely resembles his old strap. My understanding is the WWF wants to compromise, thus consenting to the restraining order.

A week earlier, the NWA and Flair had reached an agreement on getting the belt back. Flair was not going to use the belt anymore, but would retain possession until the NWA paid him the \$50,200 settlement (\$25,000 for the new NWA belt, \$25,000 for a deposit placed on the old belt and \$200 in interest) he was asking. The only hold-up came from WCW's Jim Barnett, who thought the NWA had repaid some of Flair's deposit. The NWA has three weeks to look through any financial records (which, I understand, are shaky at best) before it is forced to pay Flair.

In the ring, Flair is now being managed by "Mr. Perfect" Curt Hennig. This dilutes Flair even further as being just another one of the WWF's clowns, and I believe, will diminish his box-office appeal. The main event of the WWF's Dec. 3 pay-per-view show has also been changed to Flair vs. Hulk Hogan, with no explanation given by WWF spokesman Steve Planamenta. Flair also wrestled Bret Hart last Wednesday in what was described as an excellent match. The finish sucked, though, coming when Hennig held onto Hart's legs while The Hitman was trying to re-enter the ring, giving

Flair the victory by countout.

WCW

Dusty Rhodes' continues to turn wrestlers at a record pace. The latest switches between good and evil occurred at television tapings last Monday and Tuesday, where Johnny B. Badd officially turned babyface (again) and Terrence Taylor began a babyface turn as well. A WCW source said Rhodes was tinkering with the idea of switching Richard Morton as well and splitting up The York Foundation, but The Dream changed his mind. Taylor didn't wrestle on the TV taping, because of a pre-scheduled court appearance (I don't have any further details; will now for next issue). As most of you know, The Young Pistols turned heel and captured the U.S. Tag-Team titles from The Patriots at a TV taping two weeks ago. The Patriots have since been split into singles wrestlers.

Other highlights from TV happened mostly off-camera. Derrick "Starfire" Dukes (Yes, the same former AWA star who took a pratfall for Mark Gastineu during the summer) received a tryout. If WCW had foresight, they would sign Dukes and have him challenge Gastineu to a match. Judging from the latest problems surrounding the former New York Jets defensive lineman, some positive publicity as a babyface wrestler would do both sides good. The Handsome Stranger (Mak Bagwell) also received a tryout in a dark match (one not taped for television), and should be signed to a contract soon. Scotty "The Body" Anthony was backstage, and told to call for a tryout later in the week. From what I understand, someone in the company doesn't like Scotty, keeping this extremely talented performer from being signed.

WCW's Starrcade pay-per-view show Dec. 29 will be a partial fund-raiser for the Starlight Foundation, which grants "wishes" to terminally ill children. Mainstream celebrities will appear on the pay-per-view show, but a definite roster is currently uncertain. John Candy, who WCW was hoping would make an appearance, is unable to because of his filming schedule. However, WCW will likely end up with some pretty decent celebrities, possibly Kirk Cameron of *Growing Pains*. The guy from the Federal Express commercials who speaks quickly is also a possibility. I think he should do a segment where he names all the fans who attended WCW's live shows during the week. It would only take about 15 seconds.

Ron Simmons will be out of action until Dec. 1 with a broken wrist (we originally reported it as a wrist tendon injury). A story on the New York Times wire service Tuesday said WCW was denied permission to film a vignette of Simmons at the University of Miami-Florida State game held Nov. 16.

(Continued on Page 11)

Letters

Dear Alex:

I purchased the WWF's *Hot Ticket: Hulk Hogan, A Real American Story*, and gave it a 9 out of 10. It was well worth the \$6. A brief summary:

- After highlights of the **Hulk Hogan-Iron Sheik** bout where Hulk won the WWF title, announcer "Mean" Gene Okerlund took viewers inside the Hogan household to interview his parents. They spoke of how he was such a wonderful child and a "straight A student." They also mentioned that even though Hogan was 6-1 at 12-years-old, he was never a bully.

- Before highlights of the **Hogan-Sergeant Slaughter** match from *Wrestlemania VIII*, the WWF showed Hogan's footage from the USO tour *again*.

- At the end of the shows, Okerlund brought up **Ric Flair**. Hogan acknowledged Flair, and a previous interview with Flair in *The Funeral Parlor* was shown. The show ended with a video to Hogan featuring highlights from his matches, and footage from his USO tour and appearance on *The Jerry Lewis telethon*.

Please answer the following:

1. What will future Hot Tickets feature?
2. After Hogan loses his title at Survivor Series, will he ever regain the belt?
3. Did **Randy Savage** meet **The Lovely Elizabeth** through the WWF, or were they married before?
4. Could you give some background information on **Jim Neidhart**? Has he wrestled anywhere else, etc.?

5. Could you print photographs that readers take at the matches and print them in your "Results" section?

6. In the Oct. 14 issue of *People Magazine*, there is a feature story on Hogan. He was also featured in a recent USA today article. A year ago, I won a contest to meet Hulk. It was hyped on all the local radio and TV stations. Well, the big day came and I waited in the hallway of the Orlando Arena for him to appear. He never showed up. Instead, Dusty Rhodes signed autographs and took photos. I was wondering, is Hogan's kind heat just for publicity or is he really what he claims to be?

— Robbie Bloom, Longwood, Fla.

AM: In answer to your questions:

1. I figure the next Hot Ticket will be next May, and will probably feature Savage and Liz. Other possible Ticket features would include Sid Justice, Roddy Piper or **Sergeant Slaughter**.

2. I figure Hogan will regain the title down the road if he does drop it to **The Undertaker** at Survivor Series. I believe Justice will wind up with the belt, and then Hogan would win it back at *Wrestlemania VIX*.

3. Savage and Liz were married in 1984, about

one year prior to the duo entering the WWF. Liz (Elizabeth Hewlette) was a former Miss Kentucky, according to wrestling lore.

4. Neidhart was a former football player for the Los Angeles Raiders who once held the world record for the longest anvil throw (thus the nickname). Neidhart has wrestled in Calgary and Memphis, and earned his first niche as a main-eventer in Florida while teaming with **Krusher Kruchev** (Barry Darsow, a.k.a. **Demolition Crush**, a.k.a. **The Repo Man**) as **The Cuban Connection**. Neidhart entered the WWF early in 1985, and has teamed with **Bret Hart** almost exclusively.

5. Many of you may notice a new format to *Three Count*. That's because my girlfriend, Carol, and I have purchased a Macintosh computer with PageMaker, which allows me to run graphics and photographs. If anyone want to contribute photographs, please send them to me at P.O. Box 12795, Gainesville, Fla. 32604-0795.

6. Hulk Hogan is a fictional character. **Terry Bollea** portrays that character. Hogan does not stand for what he preaches, but has performed some charitable deeds off-camera (especially with the *Starlight Foundation* for dying children). Unfortunately, most of Hogan's high-profile charity appearances come whenever he has a new movie or wrestling match to promote (i.e. the USO tour, pictures in *People Magazine*, etc.). Whether that is co-incidence or intentional is for you to decide.

Dear Alex,

What is the WWF's address?

— Rob Newland, Clearwater, Fla.

AM: The main WWF address is 1241 East Main Street, P.O. Box 3857, Stamford, Conn. 06905. The fan club address is P.O. Box 3866, Stamford, Conn. 06905-3866.

Dear Alex:

1. **The Beverly Brothers** claim to be from Shaker Heights, Ohio. I'm from Cleveland, and I'd like to know more about them.

2. I don't believe **Bobby Heenan** is as dopey as he acts. Can I please have a little background on him?

3. While living in Cleveland, one wrestling group from Buffalo taped its television shows from WVAB-TV in Cleveland. If you have any information on any wrestlers from that era, please let me know. Amongst the names I'm curious in: **Johnny Powers**, **Ernie Ladd**, **Dick "Bulldog" Brower**, **The Mighty Igor**, **Flying Fred Curry**, **Haystacks Calhoun**, **Kurt Von Hess**, **The Masked Executioner** and **Dominic DiNucci**.

4. Is **Jim Powers** related to **Johnny Powers**?

— Roberta Miller, Delray Beach, Fla.

AM: In order:

1. In real life, The Beverly Brothers (Mike Enos and Wayne Bloom) are from Minneapolis. They wrestled as The Destruction Crew in the American Wrestling Alliance, and as The Minnesota Wrecking Crew II in WCW in spring of 1990.

2. Before entering the WWF in 1985, Heenan was a mainstay for the AWA for more than 20 years. He is the WWF's top manager, and has power within the company to help determine storylines.

3. I can help you with some of those names. The Mighty Igor was last seen wrestling in Puerto Rico about one year ago. Flying Fred Curry passed away about two years ago. Haystacks Calhoun died last December. Dominic DiNucci is still active in wrestling as a part-time trainer and promoter. DiNucci was teaching former Pittsburgh Steeler Steve Courson to wrestle before Courson suffered a steroid-related illness. If any *Three Count* readers have knowledge of the whereabouts of the other wrestlers, please let me know.

4. Jim Powers and Johnny Powers are not related. Jim Powers real name is James Manley.

Dear Alex:

When does the WWF plan to come to the Carolinas?

-- Rita Kent, Millspring, N.C.

AM: The WWF promotes sporadic shows in Charlotte and Winston-Salem, but have not had great success. They concede the southern states (South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, etc.) to WCW, with few exceptions.

Advertisements

Gary Penn of 4615 Bayshore Drive, #E-6, Naples, Fla., 33962, is looking to purchase copies of WCW pay-per-view events.

Jay Arbetman of 1100 N. Woodbine, Oak Park, IL 60302, is on the lookout for pre-1960s video tape. He is looking in particular for tapes featuring Ed "Strangler" Lewis, Wild Bill Longson and pre-1940 tapes. He has hundreds of tapes or trade, including lots of old Japanese tapes and old matches.

Brian Tramel of P.O.Box 3494, State University, AR 72467, puts out a great flyer full of information on how to obtain wrestling tapes and merchandise. The list can be obtained by sending \$1 or by enclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope.

The Wrestling Observer Newsletter is without question the best newsletter on the market today. Subscription cost is \$6 or four issues, and is available at P.O. Box 1228, Campbell, CA 95009-1228.

Matwatch and The Pro Wrestling Torch are also superior publications. Matwatch will close shop Jan. 27 1992 (Steve Beverly, change your mind...), but

issues are still available until then at \$1.25 each. The address to the weekly newsletter is 16 Robin Hood Lane, Jackson TN 38305.

The Torch is going strong at \$5 for four weekly issues. The address is P.O.Box 201844, Minneapolis, MN 55420.

Ron Lemieux is producing the very enjoyable *Arena Report* on a bi-weekly basis. The address is P.O.Box 952547, Lake Mary, Fla., 32795-2547, and is \$1 an issue.

Jimmy Berkley of 2718 Dixie Lane, Kissimmee, FL 34744 as a list of tapes available. Please enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope with a correspondence.

Carlos Rey of 996 W. 45th Place, Hialeah, FL 33012, is looking to trade Galavision Lucha Libre tapes for shows from Portland.

Desire any wrestling memorabilia? Interested in video tape of old matches or those from other parts of the country or world? Advertise here for free for subscribers only at P.O. Box 12795, Gainesville, Fla. 32604-0795. I'm also looking for results and/or analysis of matches from other arts of the country. Please send them to the above address.

Three Count is a professional wrestling newsletter published our times a month. Price for subscription is \$6 for one month, \$18 for three months, \$33 for six months and \$66 for one year. Please address all subscription checks to Three Count at P.O. Box 12795, Gainesville, Fla., 32604-0795.

I want to apologize in the delay in this week's double issue (to new subscribers -- the newsletter is usually six-to-eight pages). Between trips to Auburn and Jacksonville to cover the University of Florida football team for my other jobs (Gators beat writer for *The Tallahassee Democrat* and correspondent for *The Miami Herald*), I also travelled to Tallahassee for the Committee meeting. With the new word processing program, it has taken me a long time to assemble this issue. I hope for no further delays. Next week's newsletter will be mailed by Nov. 24, with the final issue for the month to be mailed Nov. 30, followed by a December 4 issue chronicling the WWF's Dec. 3 pay-per-view show. Once this football season ends, production of *Three Count* will resume a less erratic schedule. I have to go to New Orleans from Dec. 25-Jan. 1 to cover the Sugar Bowl, so I'm not sure yet how I will handle producing an issue that week. I may just print two interviews in an eight-page newsletter. So please, hold back the hate mail (just kidding). As usual, I'm looking for results on live shows and any letters. I will be adding Paul Hanlin of Philadelphia as a weekly columnist beginning next issue (I hope). See ya' in about seven days.

Florida's Hearings on Pro Wrestling Regulation

The proposal:

Legislative analyst Janet Clark prepared a report on professional wrestling for Florida's Committee on Regulated Industry Nov. 5 in Tallahassee. While the report did not call for regulation, it offered guidelines should the measure be suggested (which it was by Don Hazelton of the Florida's boxing commission). The measures suggested were:

- Licensing of professional wrestlers and all persons participating in a wrestling exhibition, who are at any time within the confines of the ring or the ring apron.
- Licensing of promoters of professional wrestling exhibitions.
- Licensing of other individuals, such as event coordinators, as deemed necessary by the commission.
- Requirement that the promoter provide each wrestler in his employ term life, health and accident insurance on a per event basis.
- Requirement that the promoter post a performance bond.
- Requirement that the promoter update advertisements of card changes.
- Requirement that the promoter provide for a specific level of emergency medical care at each event: a physician and ambulance; an ambulance and EMTs; or a paramedic.
- Requirement that the promoter provide for a specific level of medical examination of a wrestler prior to an exhibition, ranging from a complete physical to minimal medical screening, which might include heart-rate and blood pressure tests.
- Requirement that the promoter provide each wrestler in his employ a basic contract.
- Authority for the athletic commission to conduct random drug screenings on wrestlers.
- Authority for the athletic commission to collect a tax on the gross receipts of both live and televised events, including pay-per-view and other closed-circuit telecasts, or any combination.
- Authority for the athletic commission to collect a tax on the gross receipts of souvenirs and other concessions sold at live events.
- Expansion of the athletic commission to seven members, the two new members to be representatives of the professional wrestling industry.
- Authority for the athletic commission to impose penalties for violations of any commission rule.

The Report:

Clark's report is one of the most detailed anthologies of professional wrestling and the steroid issue ever assembled. In it, she details the history of pro wrestling, including the role Florida has taken in pro wrestling regulation. She explains that a law passed in 1957 required promoters to provide medical personnel at ringside and a medical examination be given for each performer within three hours of the match. Those provisions were in effect until 1984, when a bill made wrestling a self-regulated industry.

Clark also assembled some interesting statistics about wrestling attendance in Florida. The WWF drew an average of 4,000-5,000 fans an event for 1990, with approximately 48 events in the state. WCW drew 2,000-2,500 an event, with about 24 shows during 1990 (that number has increased significantly in 1991). She also estimates 10-12 smaller groups run shows in the state, drawing between 200-500 fans an event. Nationwide, revenue from live shows has dropped from \$43 million in 1988 to \$30 million in 1990. Clark also estimated the WWF drew only \$11 million in pay-per-view revenue for Wrestlemania VII, well below the \$21 million drawn for Wrestlemania V (which also had a smaller universe of pay-per-view subscribers).

The section marked "Areas of Concern" details anabolic steroids, which are defined as, "any group of synthetic hormones that increase constructive metabolism and are sometimes taken by athletes in training to increase temporarily the size of their muscles." There are also sections on intentional bleeding (including the tale of when Wahoo McDaniel had a razor blade lodged in his forehead and wrestled with it throughout a match in Philadelphia in 1986), medical personnel, pre-match medical examinations, health and safety insurance, performance bonds, guaranteed pay-offs for wrestlers and false advertising.

The next section discusses the boxing commission in Florida, one of 29 states that does regulate. The commission garnered \$428,814 in taxes from live boxing events in Florida in 1990, including \$328,244 from pay-per-view taxes. The state cannot tax more than \$40,000 for each pay-per-view event. Another section was devoted to how other states regulate wrestling. Of the 24 states (and District of Columbia), 20 collect a gross receipts tax on live attendance at a card. Five of those states also charge a sales tax. Most of those states also tax pay-per-view telecasts, with New York generating more than \$300,000 annually. Florida would garner approximately \$343,000 annually through taxation on pay-per-view shows. The strictest commissions appear to be in Oregon, where annual physicals, HIV screenings and random substance abuse tests are required, and New York, where a wrestling license, pre-match medical examination and ringside physician are required. None of the commissions test for steroids, although New Mexico is

planning to institute a policy.

Appendix D of the book contains transcript of the testimony of **George T. Zahorian** (discussed earlier in this issue). Among the highlights:

- Anti-steroid activist **Bruno Sammartino** was one of Zahorian's childhood idols.
- Photos of Zahorian with **Tony Garea**, **Vince McMahon**, **Hulk Hogan**, **Hillbilly Jim**, **Rick Rude** and **John Studd**, with Zahorian testifying he sold steroids to Hogan and McMahon.
- Comments from **Bill Costopolous**, Zahorian's attorney, that **WWF match-maker Pat Patterson** told Zahorian he was being investigated before his arrest.
- Testimony that Zahorian distributed anabolic steroids to **Eddie Gilbert** (who denies ever receiving the drug from Zahorian).
- Blood studies conducted on **Rick "The Model" Martel** in 1989 indicate liver damage, a side-effect of prolonged steroid use.
- That **Brian Sochia**, a former Miami Dolphins defensive tackle now with the Denver Broncos, called Zahorian in March 1990 in an attempt to obtain human growth hormone.

The speakers at the hearing:

- **Don Hazelton**: Head of the state's boxing commission. Greeted the committee and recommended regulation of wrestling in Florida.
- **Irv Rosenbaum**: City commissioner of Davie, Fla. Has wrestled in six pro matches, all for charity, since 1984. Recommended regulation, claiming "Pro wrestlers fall between the cracks. I'm not saying we need to create a bureaucracy, but the wrestlers are not treated fairly. When compared to other issues that are regulated, pro wrestling also deserves regulation."
- **Bob Roop**: Former 19-year pro wrestling veteran and member of the 1968 U.S. Olympic team. Spoke in favor of regulation as a way to begin a retirement fund for older wrestlers. "You could probably ask 99 percent of today's wrestlers if they want regulation, they would probably say no," Roop said. "You could ask them if they wanted somebody to help them balance their money or set up a retirement fund for them, their answer would be no. I feel something should be provided, because so many wrestlers fall between the cracks. I know a lot of wrestlers whose careers were ended, and they weren't prepared. There's a need for something. The actors have a home for those who retire. If there's going to be any revenues raised from a commission, I feel that would be a worthwhile thing to consider." Roop wouldn't reveal whether wrestling matches were pre-determined, claiming it would be "like the magician revealing how he saws the girl in half." However, he did say that "wrestlers don't go out and kill each other. They know each of them has matches scheduled for the upcoming months and

they have families to feed." In regards to steroids, Roop said, "The guys you see that are enormous...I'd say one in 1,000 wrestlers looks like that way genetically. Those guys would have to work out 15 years every day to look like that without some help. And the help is steroids. Whether or not that's self-induced ... You've got guys today that say, 'Yeah, I'm big, but I don't have anything going for me. I don't have any athletic background. I go to the gym everyday...let me try wrestling. Out of every 100 guys that try that, maybe two or three get in the profession. There are a lot of young men in our society who just want to get big. (Steroids) are prevalent in gyms. They might not even have use for it. When you look at it, the cartoons or **Arnold Schwarzenegger** or **Sylvester Stallone**, how can you blame them? They think the bigger and more muscular you are affects how your life is going to be. I know a lot of guys in the profession who take steroids. They're intelligent guys. They make a lot of money, and they use steroids. It's mind boggling."

• **Paul Doering**: Professor of pharmacy at the University of Florida. Son, Chris, is a walk-on wide receiver or the Gators' football team. Taught **Jody Simon (Joe Malenko)** when he was attending pharmacy school. Is the director of the athletic drug-testing committee at UF. Was preceded by a video of **Superstar Billy Graham**, one of wrestling's first steroid users. Graham has suffered major health problems from extended use of the drug, with deterioration of his joints and sterility. Doering said that 85 percent of the steroids common in weight rooms today are not obtained through normal distribution. He also said steroid testing was precise and accurate, but expensive, ranging from \$200-\$300 a test. He also explained that steroid taken in a medical dose usually does not exceed 6 milligrams a day, with anabolic steroids rarely being used in a medical purpose. He said many steroid users take 6,000 mg daily. "I would support regulation of the industry if there was random drug testing to make sure steroids were not a part of the event," said Doering, a long-time wrestling fan.

• **Gunter McMillan**: Professor of orthopedics at UF. "Wrestlers are a very high-profile outlet for anabolic steroid use," McMillan said. "We do have an epidemic of steroid use. This problem, like every other, must be fought on every front. This committee could let it be known that a highly-visible group of individuals who are serving as subliminal or overt role models to our youth are taking steroids." He also explained some of the health risks, including **Wilms Tumor** (a lethal tumor exclusive to heavy steroid users; the 1963 Mr. America died from it), liver damage, manic psychological states and permanent sterility.

• **Marylou Gantner**: Mother of the late **Ed Gantner**, a former pro wrestler and long-time steroid user who committed suicide in 1990 at the age of 30. Said she became involved after listening to a radio show one

month after Ed's death claimed no adverse health problems have been medically linked to steroids. A video of her interview on *The Jane Pauley Show* was aired before her speech in which she chronicled Ed's life. In general, Ed began using steroids in 1976 while a 17-year-old junior in high school. He quickly added 40 pounds, and received a football scholarship to the University of Tennessee. Ed began having rages of anger while in high school, his mother said, but she attributed it to his age. After his freshman year, Ed transferred to the University of Central Florida in Orlando (A Division II school, so Ed did not have to lose a year of eligibility to play). Ed went on to play two seasons for the Jacksonville Bulls (where he was a fan favorite) and one for the Tampa Bay Bandits, where he teamed with current WCW stars Lex Luger and Ron Simmons. One of Gantner's childhood friends, Scott Hall (a.k.a. The Diamond Studd), used to attend the matches with him in Orlando. During his football career, Ed began injecting himself with primate hormones, along with his usual heavy dosage of oral steroids. He also began developing a large bump on his forehead, which he claimed was an offshoot of wearing a football helmet, but was actually a side-effect of the primate hormones. Gantner broke into wrestling in 1985 along with Luger, Simmons and Dewey Forte (who never made it in the sport).

By that time, Ed had only 20 percent use of his kidneys and had suffered heart damage. After the hearing, Roop, the match-maker in Florida when Gantner began wrestling, told Marylou he was unaware of his son's health problems. "He said he just had a little kidney problem, but it was no big deal." Gantner was not a gifted wrestler by any means, but was promoted to the top of cards because of his monstrous physique. He teamed with Mr. Kareem Muhammad as The Shock Troops, managed by Sir Oliver Humperdink. During this time, the steroids warped Ed's personality. "Ed had a crazed, non-present look," Marylou said on *The Jane Pauley Show*. It was like an entity had taken over his body. He had become so abusive the woman he loved one jumped from a second story window to stay away from him. I knew about his steroid use. He used to tell me the wrestlers he drove with 300 miles a day were usually stoned and on cocaine."

In 1987, Ed went to see the doctor for a recurring cold. One month later, Ed was told he had a terminal kidney disease -- an effect of extended steroid use. He retired and moved to Boulder, Colorado, to try and put his life together. But his steroid abuse continued up until the time his kidneys failed completely in July 1988. By September 1988, he was continually on a dialysis machine, and had undergone several near-death experiences. In spring of 1989, he returned to Florida in need of a kidney transplant, which he received because of the donation of his older sister, Debbie. But five days after

the transplant, Ed's mind once again turned to weights - and subsequently steroids. He asked his weights be brought to him, only a shell of the 260-pound behemoth he used to be. "The man, the myth the legend' his buddies always kidded him," Marylou said. Ed returned home with his friends for Thanksgiving in 1989, and Marylou's worst fears were realized -- Ed was back on steroids. On Dec. 31, 1989, Ed was hospitalized with complete kidney failure. From January to March of 1990, Ed was hospitalized for six major surgeries.

When Ed returned from the hospital, it appeared he had gotten his life in order. He moved to West Palm Beach to take a job driving a truck offered by his brother-in-law. When Ed went to an NWA show in June, he was excited about seeing his old friends again. At a WWF show in West Palm Beach Aug. 13, I remember seeing a huge grin on Ed's face as he walked toward the locker room to see his old friend. I spoke with him, and asked if I could do a story on his remarkable physical comeback. He agreed, and gave me two phone numbers. I called him frequently over the proceeding two months, but never received a return phone call. In mid-December, I remember looking at his name in my rolodex, and wondered if I should give him a call. I didn't. Two weeks later, I read his obituary in The Tampa Tribune.

In that span of time, Ed had fallen into a deep depression and returned home. He was full of anti-depressant drugs (more than \$1,000 a week), with his testosterone level at an extremely low level, depriving him of energy to live. Ed told his mother, "If I had a son, I would never let him play a contact sport. He would have to take steroids to compete. I would not want him to go through the hell I'm going through." Ed also became more childlike in his last few weeks, pleading with his mother, "Mom, can't you help me? Can't you tell me what I can do?"

After the hearing, some of those at the hearing (attorney Chris Qualmann, Clark, Dave Meltzer, Gantner and I) went to lunch. Marylou told us Ed was perfectly calm when he went to the pawn shop to buy the gun he used to shoot himself through the heart. And she was scared. Marylou's description of Ed's funeral was just as shocking. "The rabbi began talking about the perils of steroids. All of the wrestler's from Ed's gym got up and walked out. They didn't want to hear it. They didn't want to hear the truth." Debbie Gantner went into shock after the funeral for four weeks, nearly dying from the psychological trauma.

"I feel Ed's script was written in steroids and iron, and shaped by a culture's admiration or armchair violence. How can a responsible society allow for the trashing of the lives of our young people, sit by indifferently and call it entertainment?"

"This distorted appetite for brutality has changed little in the past 2,000 years, when man threw his victim

to the lions and looked on it as amusement. It is done today with less immediacy, but the outcome and effect is just as final and devastating."

- **Ron Davis:** Director of Florida High School Athletic Association. Lulled Committee to sleep with 15-minute lecture about the FHSA's financial problem in instituting a steroid test. Did provide interesting statistics that 50 percent of Division I football players have used steroids, according to the American Heart Association, and 262,000 teenagers currently use the drug, according to a study of the Department of Health and Human Services. He implied some of the money that could be generated by a wrestling commission could be of use to the FHSA.

- **Dave Meltzer:** Editor of *The Wrestling Observer Newsletter*. Detailed the WWF's false advertising of Sid Justice throughout early November, but called WCW as "the worst offender." Spoke strongly in favor of steroid testing. "The sport is very visible, mostly marketed at teenagers and children. Steroid testing, which would only be beneficial if strictly enforced, is not the solution to the problem. It is part of a solution. The main solution would be if those in charge of pro wrestling were more responsible with what they portray to the public. But realistically, that isn't going to change, and the best we can hope for is part of the solution." Meltzer also explained how he was a former body-builder who idolized Graham while growing up. "I didn't know Billy Graham was a steroid user back then, and I'm glad I didn't." Meltzer pointed out the World Bodybuilding Federation's claim it had tested for steroids three times in the past year, which never happened.

- **Chris Qualmann:** The legal counsel of Eddy Mansfield's International Wrestling Federation. Qualmann said he agreed with everything proposed in the hearing, but said a commission wasn't necessary, because vehicles were already in place to enforce the laws. "Remember, these steroid laws are relatively new," Qualmann said. "If some of the steroid cases were more celebrated, that would be the most stringent effort to rid the problem from the youth of America." Qualmann said a commission would force wrestling promoters and the industry away from Florida.

The Committee's Conclusion:

Gantner's testimony and footage of Graham convinced the Committee to look at the proposal again Dec 10, when a sub-committee will look at the measures as a bill. However, the sub-committee only has 90 minutes to meet that day, because the House of Representatives has been called into special session and bills concerning legalized gambling and gaming must be discussed. The wrestling bill will likely be taken up Jan. 14 in a sub-committee meeting dedicated exclusively to pro wrestling. The WWF will offer stiff legal opposition, but

WCW will not, hoping to ride on the WWF's coattails. Clark has not arranged for speaker's in favor of the bill yet, but Wade Keller of *The Pro Wrestling Torch* is expected to attend.

WCW

(Continued from Page 5)

Only *The Miami Herald* and *The Tallahassee Democrat* were allowed to send more than three reporters to the game, as more than 200 credential requests were denied.

Independents

The Global Wrestling Federation appears to be on its last legs. Reports of the group's demise a few weeks ago were pre-mature, but most of the group's top stars (Handsome Stranger, The Patriot, Chris Walker) have left. I understand the group will be promoting strictly out of Dallas, using only local talent. Unfortunately, that doesn't make the group very different from the USWA footage that used to air on ESPN.

One Dallas source said Fritz Von Erich is making noise about re-opening a wrestling promotion. Good luck.

National Geographic Explorer had a fascinating special on Lucha Libre in Mexico on TBS this past week. The show explained how the Luchadores (wrestlers) are idols to the people, and how in some cities, the wrestlers represent real-life heroes and villains. For example, there is a wrestler called Super Barrio who parades for the rights of the poor in Mexico (and, Lord knows, there's plenty of that in Mexico). He holds free matches in the streets, facing his arch rival -- The Landlord. They also showed footage of El Santo (the most famous Mexican wrestler ever) and an interview with Virginia Aguilar, a 91-year-old woman who attends the Lucha shows at Arena Mexico every Friday night. Aguilar was presented with a birthday cake by the wrestlers earlier in the year for her 50th year of attending Lucha matches without ever missing a show. Heaven forbid a U.S. promoter rewards his most loyal fans with anything but false advertisement and poor live shows.

Spotlight On: Eddie Gilbert

This is the final segment of a three-part interview with Eddie "Hot Stuff" Gilbert. Issues 7 and 8 featuring the first two segments are still available for those interested. The interview resumes with Gilbert talking about a Jerry Lawler-Lex Luger unification match.

EG: Lawler is the only reason Memphis is still alive. We all kind of know that. Lawler could retire right now. He doesn't need the money. He's a miser. He doesn't care about traveling to make a loop with Lex Luger. I know the guy too well. Even if he won and kept the belt for a month and then had to drop it back to Luger, Lawler's ego wouldn't take that. And it will truly kill Memphis. And he knows that.

AM: Do you truly believe it will kill Memphis?

EG: He thinks that. That's not what I think. Billboards in the city have his picture on it. He doesn't want to leave the city. There's been too many times we've talked where he tells me he didn't want to go to Dallas when (Jerry) Jarrett was running there. This "King" thing to him is a shoot. He believes it. The ego is totally out. My feelings are that Jarrett knows (Jim) Herd's time may be up by the first of the year because of his contract. If Jarrett waits two months and thinks he could be booker or run the company, he could make Jerry Lawler world champion. And as crazy as that sounds, that's what he would do. Jarrett loves that guy. I mean, sometimes I wonder. That way, Lawler would never have to drop the belt back. If the (Luger-Lawler match) does come off I think it would be in the next month, because I think they would put the belt on Lawler. Lawler will never drop it back to Lex Luger.

AM: Does WCW realize this?

EG: No, because they don't know what they're dealing with. They don't realize how they messed up in the situation with me and Paul (E. Dangerously) to show them neither side can trust each other.

One thing I learned from Memphis is that if you do something, try to make it look like a shoot as much as possible. If they would have done it the right way ... Lawler walking on to the set and coming across like he really is. A true heel-type person. In a heel vs. heel type thing. If he would have said what really was on his mind, the thing would have a chance to work. I don't know about draw, but it would provide for some interesting TV. People would have said, "Wow, a real storyline." A guy would really have a reason to be on TV, and it would have been a little shocker. If it would have happened, I think it would have been decent. From my dealings with Lawler, he always told me to just come out and say what I wanted to. To say the lowest things I could think about him. And he said the same things to me. Actually, interview-wise, (Luger-Lawler) would have been better than (Ric) Flair and (Hulk) Hogan. Because Lawler is ruthless. He'll say something like, "Y'all are a big promotion trying to run us out of business." But there are so many personalities involved in the angle. You've got Lawler's and Jarrett's ego. You've got Luger's ego, Dusty (Rhodes') ego. And that's before you talk about Jim Ross and Jim Herd -- The father and son of the company.

And what really bothers me is that nobody has ever talked about Ross, his personality. He's a great commentator. But nobody ever writes anything bad about him.

AM: Do you mean sheet writers?

EG: Yeah, I guess. And I hope after talking to three of them (Dave Meltzer, Wade Keller and Steve Beverly) that they will shine some light on him. The whole (Memphis problem) came up on his hotline. I hope people look at the deal. That's the big, big thing. If their gonna burn Paul's ass over something he didn't even say, why not burn the guy who said the thing on his hotline?

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P.O. Box 12795
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